Hadley's

Churches

III

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FOLDER III

THE FIRST CHURCH IN HADLEY
by
Fern F. Nutter

The story of the first church of Hadley spans nearly three hundred years to coincide with almost three centuries of town history, for in the beginning the town and the church were one. The original records, yellowed but still legible, are housed in the Town Hall, a close neighbor to the old meeting house which lifts its graceful spire above elm-shaded Middle Street. These two beautiful buildings stand together in the center of the town. A bronze plaque beside the door of the white church, incorporated in 1920 as The First Congregational Church of Hadley, tells the tourist or camera fan - - - and 1959 will see many of both - - - that this, the third meeting house, is only one hundred and fifty years of age and that it was moved from its original location on the West Street Common.

The people of Hadley will tell more if they are questioned. They all know that the gilded weathercock, which tops the spire, was brought over from England in 1752 to mark the wind's direction from its vantage point on the second meeting house, and that it was transferred to the present building in 1808. The spire of this third meeting house is said to be modeled after those which Christopher Wren designed in England a century before. The clock, which is below the steeple, is not considered old for it was a gift at the time of Hadley's Quarter Millennial Celebration in 1909. Parts of an older clock can be seen in the Goodwin Memorial Library across the street. This building was named for William Goodwin, the Ruling Elder when the first meeting house was built. The reading room of the library contains Sylvester

THE FIRST CHURCH IN DANBURY

by

Jerr T. Butler

The story of the first church of Danbury spans nearly three hundred years to contribute with almost three centuries of town history, for in the beginning the town and the church were one. The original records, yellowed but still legible, are housed in the Town Hall, a close neighbor to the old meeting house which lifts its graceful spire above elm-shaded Wooster Street. These two beautiful buildings stand together in the center of the town. A bronze plaque beside the door of the white church, incorporated in 1920 as The First Congregational Church of Danbury, tells the tourist or casual fan - - - and 1922 will go down as both - - - that date, the third meeting house, is only one hundred and fifty years of age and that it was moved from its original location on the West Street Common.

The people of Danbury will tell more if they are questioned. They all know that the gilded weathercock, which tops the spire, was brought over from England in 1732 to mark the wind's direction from its vantage point on the second meeting house, and that it was transferred to the present building in 1852. The clock of this third meeting house is said to be modeled after those which Christopher Wren designed in England a century before. The clock, which is below the steeple, is not considered old for it was a gift at the time of Danbury's Centennial Celebration in 1870. Parts of an older clock can be seen in the Danbury Memorial Library across the street. This building was named for William Goodwin, the Danbury Tailor who the first meeting house was built. The reading room of the library contains Sylvester

Judd's History of Hadley, a unique work which records meticulous details of the town's early history; Alice Morehouse Walker's charming little book, Historic Hadley; and Clifton Johnson's History of the Connecticut Valley, which devoted a full chapter to colonial Hadley. Mr. Johnson, the author, lived his entire life in the Hockanum section of Hadley and loved it. He did much to restore the beauty of his wife's church, the subject of our sketch, replacing small panes of glass in the windows, strengthening beams and adding a basement. They'll tell you in Hadley that he spent a small fortune in restoration, and it would appear to be so. They will also direct you, if you show sufficient interest, to the two stones which serve as markers for the location of the first meeting house and the home of the first pastor, John Russell, Jr., down on West Street.

Since early ecclesiastical records were destroyed by a parsonage fire in 1765, the logical place for a study of church history must have its beginning in the Town Hall. An interest in this church, the oldest in western Massachusetts with the exception of the First Church in Springfield, is whetted by the attitude and general knowledge which the friendly folk of Hadley dispense, on the eve of their Tercentennial Celebration, to new citizens or strangers in their midst. The church has been a part of this rural community for such a long time that a love and reverence for it and its influence is felt by the townspeople, the majority of whom today have descended from other nationalities and, holding other faiths, worship in two nearby churches

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within sight of their elder neighbor. Another church in Hadley, situated three miles to the north, is a direct descendant from its mother church and is called the Second Congregational Church of North Hadley.

It is a pleasant experience to begin a perusal of town records in a building which houses the tale of a church and a town for three centuries. A venerable town clerk can supply additional facts and his observations are acute and informative. In such a setting the story of a church and the town which developed about it begins to live.

The First Church did not come into being because an aggregation of fur traders desired to establish a settlement in the wilderness inhabited by Indians. It was rather the result of two groups from organized churches in Wethersfield and Hartford, Connecticut, who came with their pastor, Parson John Russell, in full accord as to church doctrines. This group of "withdrawers" differed from the others in their churches on certain controversial and compelling matters, we are led to believe, such as church membership, rights of brotherhood and qualifications for baptism. The formation of a company in Hartford on April 18, 1659, with its pledge "if God permit, to Transplant ourselves and families to the plantation purchased on the East side of the river Connecticut", is the first record of Hadley's beginnings.

While the facts regarding the plans for the first meeting house were not recorded until February 25, 1660, there was note of regular worship conducted earlier in "Hired houses" and one can well believe

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The First Church in Hadley (cont.)

that heads were bowed in humble thanksgiving when this hardy band reached the land which they had chosen and purchased from the Indians the previous year. Worship had long been a daily practice of these men and women and God would not have been forgotten in this time of "pressing Exigencies".

Imagination can take rein while the pages of the record book are turned, and we can feel certain that plans for a church building were being made while homes and shelters were being constructed. Before the end of the year one can read the following vote:"to Build and Erect a meeting house to be a place of publick worship whose figure is 45 foote in length and 24 foote in Bredth, with Leantors (lean-tos) on both sides, which shall Inlarge the whole to 36 in Bredth. The Towne have allsoe ordered, that the meeting house aforesaid when prepared, shall be scittuated and sett up in the common Street . . . . . in the most convenient place as the Committee chosen by the Towne for that purpose, shall determine." This building was not completed until 1670 after the time the inhabitants on the west side of the river were set apart as the town of Hatfield.

This decision to withdraw had been manifested during the years when work on the meeting house was progressing, for the site chosen by the Committee, while on a northerly spot on the Common, did not seem too "Convenient" for the group of settlers across the river. They came to church, they protested in a petition to the General Court, with women and children so "affrighted by vessels tossed", rough waters and strong current that they deemed themselves unfit to attend holy ordinances. Certainly, upon their return by canoe,

The First Church in Hadley (cont.)

some were "more fit for their beds than for family duties and God's services, which they ought to attend". And while this controversy seethed inside and outside of meeting, the Committee was given power in November, 1663, to "sett and sise the wages of men and teams" for work on the meeting house. During these years the parson was building an addition to his house, the group was voting twenty pounds per annum towards "maintenance of a Scoole Master to teach Children and to be as a helpe to Mr. Russell as occasion may require", and the "Seateing of persons in the meeting house in a more comelie order than at present" was up for consideration. A constable was appointed "to see that there be no disorder within or without the meeting house every Lord's daye".

The meeting house was "wrought and framed" in 1665 and on December 21, 1668, the town records contain a vote that the meeting house was to be seated with boards and rails, probably referring to the long plain benches common to this period which would accommodate five or six persons each. While we are led to believe that sermons frequently lasted three hours, there is no record that the benches had backs. An order to enable two deacons, two elders and Mr. Henry Clarke of the building committee to seat 128 persons came on January 12, 1670. Each person was to pay for his seat and thus absorb the expense of the building by an assessment of three shillings three pence each.

The young Harvard College graduate, Parson John Russell, Jr., who had served as minister in Wethersfield before removing with the "Engagers" to Hadley, was not forgotten. He was paid his rate, about

80 pounds, "every halfe year" in wheat, peas and corn, and was given an eight-acre homelot in addition to thirty-eight acres of meadow land. If ministers were given a bonus in early days, it was the cordwood for their homes.

Scattered fragmentary descriptions concerning the appearance of the building can be read at intervals before the town voted to buy a bell "at the rate in good winter whoate at 3 shillings per bushel" and if the wheat could be sold in Boston for more than four shillings three pence so that the bell was paid for, the town was to "have the overplus". Without record or tradition to give the form of the meeting house, Judd, in his History of Hadley, judges that the leantos were probably rejected, the building was as wide at the top as the bottom, and the bell was doubtless hung from a turret rising in the center of the building. A few pews may have been built around the walls and, as the minister faced the congregation, all the males were on his right and the females on his left. Families did not sit together and since children sat alone in the center aisle it was voted on January 11, 1671, "that there shall be some sticks sett up in the meeting house in severall places with some fitt persons placed by them and to use the same as occasion shall require to keepe youthe from disorder". At least youth was normal though naughty at times even in days of the Puritans!

In 1676 it had been voted that the meeting house be fortified and thereafter every male inhabitant above 16 years of age brought his "Armes and Ammunition on Lords dayes and Lectures to meeting and

in default 12 pence per man for every neglect" was ordered. The early settlers held that good and proper town business could be transacted as well in a meeting house as elsewhere, so the little building saw constant use. Galleries were added on the north and south after 1699 and, since one partially completed gallery was said to be on the east, the pulpit undoubtedly was at the west end. The bell by this time had been replaced by a larger bell"that may be heard generally by the inhabitants" as the result of a bequest in Mr. Henry Clarke's will and this bell was rung regularly at nine o'clock "every night throughout the yeare winter and summer".

Parson John Russell had died before the turn of the century with an enviable reputation, after serving thirty-three years, as shepherd to his flock. His interests and good influence had extended beyond the environs of Hadley. Aside from his ministrations in the town during critical periods, his fame was firmly established in at least two different directions. The one concerns the Angel of Hadley. No one has ever disproved that he housed two regicides, Goffe and Whalley, and, whether the Angel of Deliverance story is fact or fiction, his vaunted hospitality and courageous fidelity to his belief in the cause of human liberty entitles him to his pedestal in Hadley's history. If the white-haired General Goffe did dramatically appear from his hiding-place in the Parson's cellar, alert the church members gathered in the church for worship, and lead them to repulse the surprise Indian attack only to submerge

into hiding after the danger was past, it is a story over which only historians quarrel. The average citizen of Hadley feels it is a good story worth remembering and many Hadley homes have the lithograph of F. E. Chapman's original painting on their walls. Hopkins Academy Alumni have commissioned the local artist, John Gnatek, to reproduce the scene in oil (the original hangs in the Forbes Library in Northampton) so that it may be hung in the High School building as a gift to the town on Hadley's three hundredth birthday.

The other influence of Parson Russell was felt by this same Hopkins Academy. It owes much to the good Parson for his care of the Hopkins Fund. He had the courage to oppose some of his own parishioners' desire to convert the money to ordinary school purposes. The school's present existence and honored career reflect the doughty pastor's acumen.

Reverend Isaac Chauncy was ordained the second minister in Hadley in 1695 and served for 45 years. He was housed in Parson Russell's home, for it had been purchased by the town. During his pastorate England and France made peace and Indian warfare came to an end. This made it possible for the settlers to give thought to more commodious arrangements for their religious services; new members were assuming positions of responsibility and the settlement was growing. It was voted in 1713, the year when the Eleazer Porter house was being built (now the oldest house standing in Hadley and occupied by the McQuesston family), that "we build a new

The First Church in Hadley (cont.)

Meeting House and that the Meeting house That we have agreed to build shall be 40 foot in length and 40 foot in breadth with a flattish roof and a Bellcony on one end of said house". The location of the new meeting house was further south, again in the middle of the Common near or in the present Lions Club park. No longer need consideration be given to the convenience of their neighbors who now worshipped across the river. This building was completed in 1714 but more pews were added in 1717, the gallery and desk were painted and the house was plastered. Eleazar Porter, son of Samuel, a first settler, presented the church with a sounding board and an elegantly carved pulpit. Fastened to the pulpit was a slightly elevated pew where the Deacons sat facing the congregation. Square pews were added for a few of the members and the front of the gallery by this time was occupied by singers or members of the choir. Previously the singing had been entirely congregational. At this time new committees were ordered to "seat the church" for frequent auditing was needed to determine the relative positions in the Lord's house. Age, estate or other qualifications were never peremptorily stated and though certain seats seemed to "look to be eaquall" with others, their occupants were often dissatisfied. And, where previously church members had brought foot warmers to heat the frosty air, the building by 1730 was heated by iron stoves.

Some years later "the Bellcony was made into a spire", the first in Hampshire County, ninety to one hundred feet high, and the weathercock set aloft where the congregation could be reminded of the Bible

Story that Peter would deny his Lord three times before the cock crowed. It also may have reminded them of their need for repentance but it surely indicated how variable Connecticut Valley winds could be.

Dr. Franklin Bonney, Hadley's beloved physician of the late nineteenth century, has a note in his voluminous papers that a colored boy, Zebulon Prutt, climbed the spire and sitting atop the weathercock, "the size of a sheep", crowed like a rooster. Whether this was the incentive for two youths to climb the third meeting house spire to steal and secrete the rooster a century later (also a Dr. Bonney note) is not definitely known. Both stories are commonly discredited today, perhaps to discourage the present generation from trying to emulate these ancient feats.

The third pastor, Reverend Chester Williams, who preached only fifteen years, died at the early age of 36. He gained notoriety since he served as scribe for the ecclesiastical council which dismissed Reverend Jonathan Edwards from his neighboring pulpit in Northampton. Mr. Williams' vote for dismissal, it has been written, would not have pleased Parson Russell who would have agreed with with the theologian Edwards' strict attitude toward matters of communion. Mr. Williams was followed by Reverend Samuel Hopkins, who married his predecessor's widow, Sarah, daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Hadley. It was her mother, Madam Porter, whose diary escaped the parsonage fire and provides information for the historians of today.

The First Church in Hadley (cont.)

The period of the Revolutionary War fell within Mr. Hopkins' pastorate as did its aftermath, Shays' Rebellion. Soon the question of a new church begins to appear in the town records. After consideration and reconsideration, it was voted to build a new meeting house near the location of the old one, the expense of which was to be defrayed by the sale of church pews and a rate upon the town. One thing which the building committee, composed of Honorable Charles Phelps, Lieutenant Caleb Smith and General Samuel Porter, was instructed to consider concerned the space beneath the old meeting house. The new one was to be built so no room was provided for stray geese, wandering sheep or noisy boys. The racket beneath the old meeting house had provided unwelcome competition for the minister. But nothing was said about a storage space for gunpowder in this new building. An era of peace seemed at hand and powder need no longer be stored in the turret as it had been during previous years. The building was to face the rising sun, the bell was to be recast and a committee was appointed to determine in which direction it should swing. Much was accomplished on this day, it would seem, for at the same meeting it was voted that no hats would be allowed to be hung in any part of the meeting house. And in that meeting, too, it was voted that the north arched pews were to be "appropriated for the use of black females and the south ones to the black males".

It might here be recorded that all the previous ministers held slaves and seemed not at all concerned over the present Christian concept that race does not erect a barrier, for under God all men have dignity. Even as late as 1836 pew owners would forfeit their

pews if they permitted occupancy by a negro or a mulatto. Pews rented for a yearly sum of thirty-five dollars at that time.

Search has often been made among histories, records, diaries, and letters for definite information as to how the building committee proceeded. It has intrigued architects, builders and the man on the street alike, for surely some eminent and skilfull designer was consulted for the plans of so splendid a structure. That outside help was needed in the finishing stages is indicated in an obscure notice in a September issue of the Hampshire Gazette in 1809, "WANTED IMMEDIATELY, Two or three journeymen joiners; Enquire at new meeting house in Hadley. Signed Cotton White." But this does not throw much light on the mystery which surrounds the initial plans.

It is true that the third meeting house has a spire which greatly resembles that of the Old North or Christ Church in Boston, as it was restored in 1804 by Bulfinch. He was a Boston architect who had studied in England. The graceful minarets, hand-wrought cornices, urns, balustrades and columns are so similar that one is inclined to believe they are the work of the same designer. But the mark of the master is often left on the one who has studied his work and Christ Church is almost an exact copy of an edifice in the suburbs of London which was designed by Christopher Wren.

It is quite possible that Charles Phelps may have consulted with Bulfinch on his frequent trips to Boston where he visited at the home of his daughter and son-in-law. He had been Hadley's representative in the Great and General Courts repeatedly and would

have had sufficient opportunity in his travels to observe well-designed buildings. A great-granddaughter of Charles Phelps has written that Mr. Phelps "superintended every detail from hauling of the lumber to the disposal of the pews". An excerpt from the diary of Madam Phelps (now the possession of her great-great-grandson, Dr. James L. Huntington of Forty Acres, Hadley) on June 5, 1807, contained mention that "Chas. returned from Boston", to be followed four days later with the entry that "about seven o'clock we went into town, heard Mr. Hopkins. He prayed on the frame of the new meeting house. They soon began the raising". Again in October of the same year was the note that "Mr. Phelps went this day and ten teams to Pelham for the meeting house step stones".

At last, seventeen months from the day of raising, the meeting house was ready for occupancy. It was arranged, because of Mr. Hopkins' age, that his son-in-law would preach the dedication sermon. Madam Phelps recorded the day of dedication in her diary and poured out her heart in rejoicing that the "Lord hath held them together" and had answered their prayers so that most of those of different "sentiment" had come into the meeting house for the formal services. Some of this "sentiment" had reference to the location. Even at that time some citizens had urged Back Street, now Middle Street, as a site for the building. The matter had been referred to an "indifferent committee" and even though it was pointed out that there was no room for horse sheds on the Common, the majority had insisted the new meeting house be located there.

The First Church in Hadley (cont.)

Following the dedication came the final accounting. The committee reported a net cost of $8413. The proceeds from the sale of seventy-eight pews in January, 1809, was $7031. With twenty-four unsold pews valued at $1420, the paper receipts amounted to thirty-eight dollars in excess of costs. It was recommended that the town authorize the borrowing of money to complete the payment of outstanding bills. Compare the dollar's value with that of today! The interest alone, which was paid in 1957, for the debt on the new High School in Hadley was $11,935.

The years which followed were comparatively peaceful. There still smoldered the matter of the horse sheds but the last mention of this controversy is made in the town record of May 18, 1819. In March, 1824, it was voted to raise the salary of Reverend John Woodbridge, the fifth pastor, to $650 plus cordwood. This appears to be the last action recorded relating to the church in the town records. Even the church records betray no major problems.

The next matter of note concerned the withdrawal in 1831 of a group of the congregation who now had a sufficient number to form a church nearer their homes in Upper Mills, now North Hadley. In addition to Hatfield, by this time Amherst, Granby and South Hadley had formed communities and churches of their own. Today nine churches have descended from this mother church.

Nor in Hadley had the population remained dormant. Geographically Front Street (now West Street) was no longer the center of town and it was agreed to move the church eastward. What a feat this was to raise the church on wooden rollers and move it up Russell Street! En route, for the moving took weeks, buggies and persons passed beneath the building and services on Sundays were held within. The man engaged

to move the building was paid $1000. And what a temptation it was for the "Back-Streeters" to keep the building moving once it was enthroned on rollers. "Keep her rolling, boys", called out the tempters and the building passed by the chosen site between West and Middle Streets. Not until it stood by the new town hall was it halted permanently, turned around this time so that it faced the setting sun and its old home on West Street. This did not appease the enraged "Front-Streeters", who expressed their feelings of betrayal immediately by asking for letters of dismissal. After repeated church councils, these were granted, A Russell Church Society was formed and a new church was built on West Street. It stood between the present Fire House and the Elmwood Hotel. There West Streeters worshiped for half a century. As new inhabitants settled in Hadley with the coming of immigration, many old homes on West Street changed owners and eventually the church for a single street outlived its usefulness. The schism between the streets which divided a church gradually healed and by Court order, the proceeds from the sale of the Russell Church to the Polish people was turned back to the Mother Church. The Russell Church building, now the Holy Rosary Church, was moved to Russell Street approximately where the West Street people had expected the First Church to be located a century before.

The third meeting house needed extensive repairs when it was first moved to Middle Street. A new floor was laid on the level of the original gallery. A gallery was erected across the western end for the choir. It was furnished anew with pews, pulpit, communion

table, sofa, chairs and carpet. In the fall of 1848 the lower story was divided into two parts so that a large vestry was made on the first floor. By this time Reverend Rowland Ayres was ordained and proceeded to occupy the pulpit as well as the new parsonage on Middle Street, for three and a half decades.

In the first two hundred years the church had only nine pastors. During the last century fifteen ministers have served the parish. The present minister is Reverend Paul A. Crow, Jr., a graduate student at Hartford Theological Seminary.

The church has held suitable commemorative exercises whenever the occasion demanded. It took the lead in dignified services a century ago and again during the two hundred and fiftieth celebration.

In 1925, due to the generosity of Mr. Clifton Johnson and other public-spirited citizens, the church underwent steeple and building repairs. About this time the horse sheds back of the church were torn down after standing at least a century. In 1946 a Committee planned re-dedication ceremonies following extensive postwar repairs to the sanctuary. Glass cases were constructed to house communion silver. A pewter plate said to be part of the communion service used from 1659 to 1703 is displayed there. One of the choicest silver cups, given by Peter Montague over a half century before the Declaration of Independence (the date on the cup is 1723), is in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. It and a smaller cup of about the same vintage are on loan at the present time. Some of the older pieces of silver are gifts from John Hopkins, the son of Reverend Samual Hopkins, Hadley's fourth pastor for fifty-six years, and from Elizabeth Phelps,

The First Church in Hadley (cont.)

daughter of ~~Dr.~~ Capt. Moses Porter. Beside one of the glass cases stands a hand-wrought section of the bell yoke from the second meeting house.

A small but historic church such as this needs constant care for its upkeep and preservation. The congregation is smaller than formerly but no less loyal. It should be a matter of pride to a community to know that friends in this area have come forward with offers of assistance when huge expenditures have been necessary, but even major improvements are usually assumed by the congregation alone.

The church has continued to serve the town while it no longer furnishes a place of worship for all. During times of flood (1927, 1935 and 1939), all nationalities regardless of creed were housed and fed within its walls. It was not just the congregation which acted as hosts, for foodstuffs, bedding and hours of service were donated by those who were able to share. The people in Hadley can and do work together.

Twice, when Hopkins Academy was destroyed by fire, classes were held in the old meeting house. There are citizens today who recall sitting on the woodpile in the present location of the church kitchen while school fellows recited their lessons. While strength was growing for the erection of St. John's Church, masses were held in the First Church before the regular services during one summer. The church strives to continue to be helpful to those who have need.

Organizations often find a convenient place to congregate in the large or small vestry. The Hope Grange has met in the church for decades and the First Church Men's Club now includes members of

other faiths and citizens of other towns. They gather through the winter months for food and fellowship. Local groups use the church building and kitchen. The latter is a jolly place when men, women and children of the church gather at least twice a year to dispense home-cooked food in old-fashioned helpings.

Within the church its members have learned and are still learning that austerity and uniform codes of behavior and belief are neither as desirable nor as essential as Christian service and a gentle and generous understanding of human needs. Being human they seem to love the building itself and delight to share their appreciation with any who stop to admire the beautiful structure.

At times, there are those in Hadley who pass the old meeting house and pause to lift enamored eyes past the clock and the splendidly simple steeple so that they may rest their gaze for a moment on the gaily-swinging, gilded weathercock. They know all the while that these things are temporal. But, lifting their eyes to the white-fleeced clouds in the blue sky above, they know, just as surely, that the things of the spirit are eternal.

THE WOMEN'S UNION OF THE FIRST CHURCH OF HADLEY
by
Elizabeth Johnson Harrop and May Bliss Johnson

The Women's Union of the First Church was founded in 1834. It has carried on to this date, having had one hundred and twenty-three annual meetings.

The following is a quotation from an historical sketch written in 1927 by Miss Agnes Ayers, whose father, the late Roland Ayers, was Pastor of the First Church from January 12, 1848, until February 13, 1883.

"In 1834, ninety three years ago, The Young Ladies' Seamen's Friend Society was formed in our church. By a process of evolution from that day to this we have carried on and now have our Women's Union. I wish now to give you a little picture I have of my impressions as a child of eight or nine of a meeting of that society at the parsonage. I see the parlor, used only on state occasions, opened, and a cheery fire burning in the fireplace. I see the ladies arriving with their band-boxes containing their caps which were donned when their bonnets were laid on the parlor-chamber bed. I see them sitting around, five of them, some sitting on the old black hair cloth sofa knitting industriously on heavy wool stockings for the sailors. I see the gold banded china, set out with the silver teapot and other accessories; the pantry shelves

scrubbed and immaculate ready for the donation of goodies sure to be brought and to which those shelves are mostly strangers. Then after the ladies had their tea, served as they sat in the parlor, it was my honored privilege to take one of the best linen damask towels, red bordered and fringed, one end dampened and holding it in the middle, pass it to each lady in turn while she daintily wiped her fingers on the wet end drying them on the other. Not one of them had the slightest idea she was breaking a sanitary code, dear old souls, whose successors we may well be proud to be." This ends the quotation from Miss Ayers' paper.

In 1883, the name of the society was changed to "The Ladies' Aid Society of the First Parish in Hadley." Instead of working for the seamen, the work was to be for the parish alone. Up to this time money was raised by dues, fines, donations, the making of needle-books, and the sewing of suspenders brought from a factory in Easthampton. Forty-two to sixty dollars were raised in a year. Now the ladies solicited sewing from others, and bed-quilts, comforters, and aprons were made. Town Meeting and Farmer Institute dinners were served. As early as 1885 the "Annual Chicken Pie Supper" in the fall, and the "Strawberry Festival" in the spring, were served - - sums ranging from $120 to $673 were raised per year.

In 1895, the Chicken Pie Supper netted $36.60. This was a year of discouragement, and on October 30th, after a vacation of nine months, six ladies met. They worked as long as they could see, but were too discouraged to take a collection or to eat the basket lunch

they were invited to bring. On December 6, six ladies again met, increased the amount in the treasury by twenty cents and again went supperless to their homes. On December 12, twelve ladies met, contributed sixty cents and had a social cup of coffee; and the report closes thus: "We are not so courageous, nor enthusiastic as in some former years, yet we are loyal, thankful, willing and hopeful."

Here is an item which does not sound like Hadley's reputed bountiful helpings: "A general supper was served at fifteen cents per person. This was not a success because of the scarcity of food and the lack of people."

In 1896 the society was asked to pay insurance on the church, "long overdue", which it did. The same year, the chimneys on the parsonage were repaired, and a new floor was laid in the vestry of the church.

In 1900 it was thought best to serve a supper once a month, and charge fifteen cents. "So few attended and the food sent in was so lacking in variety, we could only ask ten cents. This did not replete our treasury as fast as we had hoped."

1902 saw the society reorganized. A new constitution was adopted, and the name was changed to the "Ladies' Church Club". A successful year followed. Three hundred and nineteen dollars were raised.

In 1909 the club was asked to help pay the pastor's salary. It complied.

The Women's Union (cont.)

It was suggested in 1910 that the club install a new cook-stove in the parsonage, which was done.

1913 found a new roof on the parsonage financed by the club.

A fire-escape, which according to law was a must, was asked for to be placed in the church auditorium. This stairway was installed near the pulpit platform, for which the Ladies' Church Club paid the bill. Also in 1914 the club raised two-thirds of the cost of the bathroom in the parsonage.

In 1915 we helped, financially, to repair the steeple with a $500 donation, and in 1916 we helped to make up the missionary apportionment; and so on went the club's work.

In the records I find also gifts by the club to needy persons - - a ton of coal here, money there, a wheel-chair, a quilt tacked and bound, and flannel underwear - all given without charge to anyone.

In the Sixtieth Annual Report we read: "We hope this organization will continue for many years, and that our parish may become so prosperous that it will not need our aid, and we may direct our charities outside our church."

This brings our writing up to 1917 when the club became the "Women's Club of the First Church", and met every two weeks.

In 1920 the club assumed the expenses of putting the parsonage into an attractive and comfortable condition. The same year, together with Hope Grange, we purchased a piano for the large vestry.

1923 found new hardwood floors laid in the two parlors of the parsonage, and the bills were paid by the "Women's Club".

The Women's Union (cont.)

In 1925 Mr. Clifton Johnson excavated the cellar of the church, and restored and redecorated the entire building, at which time the Women's Club contributed $500.

The 1927 Flood proved to be an opportunity for our club to show just what it was made for. The ladies, a few at first, more later, cared for and fed two hundred homeless men, women and children from Saturday thru Monday, or until there was no more need. The church was kept open and meals were served all during the disaster.

The Strawberry Festival in 1930 took on a note of a "Colonial Affair". It began in the afternoon with stagecoach rides around the town, and an exhibition of folk-dancing in colonial costumes by children of the parish. The horse-sheds were used for booths for the sale of aprons, food, and gifts. The waitresses at the supper were also dressed in colonial attire. This year also saw our first Mother-Daughter banquet. Approximately ninety-eight mothers and daughters attended, and it was hoped it might become an annual affair. It did continue for several years.

In 1938 the club marked what was called the 100th Anniversary of its existence as a women's society. It was really four years late, but was perhaps a more successful affair because of its tardiness.

It was in the year 1941 that the club's president instituted a Lord's Acre Project in the form of Mite or Lord's Acre Boxes, which was very successful for several years. The proceeds from the boxes were used for worthy causes.

The Women's Union (cont.)

From 1941 to 1946 sociability and hard work entered into the year's interests, which made the club even stronger, spiritually as well as financially, than it had ever been. The club renovated the dining-room - - formally called the large vestry. It sewed for the Red Cross, the Cooley Dickinson Hospital, and the Children's Home. It repaired the parsonage, and instituted the birthday calendar which has been printed ever since - - fourteen years, to be exact. It was this year that the Women's Club contributed first to the Camp Anderson fund, agreeing to send two children to the camp. This has continued to date.

In 1946 the Sanctuary and front hall of the church were redecorated. Traverse-rod draperies were installed with money contributed by interested people, and made by members of the club. An epoch of importance took place this year of 1946 when the Women's Club invited the Women's Missionary Society of the First Church to merge. This union took place April 24, 1946, and the club became the "Women's Union of the First Congregational Church of Hadley", with an all-new constitution and by-laws, and monthly meetings, combining all the women's work of the church.

In connection with the Annual Chicken Pie Supper, a fair has been held most of the years since 1920. They have been most successful, with an abundance of articles for sale, and aprons in particular, made by the current sewing committee of the Union.

It was in 1949 that the Women's Union adopted a budget of $735. Of this, $500 was to be set aside as a donation to the church treasury, and $235 for the various missionary projects. Each year

thereafter a budget has been estimated by the Executive Board and voted upon at the next regular business meeting, and adopted at the annual meeting, $500 or more being set aside for the use of the church.

When 1950 came along, a new minister was coming also; so under the auspices of the Women's Union, and with the consent of the trustees of the church, the Women's Union went to work to redecorate the parsonage. Working together, the men of the church did the interior painting and repairing, while the women cleaned, tore off paper, and repapered seven rooms. The Women's Union paid the bills.

In 1952 the Women's Union reupholstered the pews of the Sanctuary, and our budget climbed from $735 to over $1000 per year. And still there seemed to be much work for us to do. We were earning our money chiefly by serving suppers as real caterers.

We compiled a cookbook in 1953, which was modern in every sense. This was the third such book that the ladies had printed.

It was in 1955 that the Union, together with the church, reconstructed the kitchen, making an old hallway and truly a catch-all, into a delightful kitchenette, and also remodelling the original kitchen. Also this year the Union purchased two hundred metal collapsible chairs.

In 1956 our president solicited funds, and distributed eleven Christmas baskets of fruit and candy to shut-in parishioners. That year we purchased hymnals for use in the vestry. We also had the usual food sales, a rummage sale, and a paper drive for the benefit

of the Children's Hospital of Boston. For the past several years our Friendly Service group has been at work. In addition to its regular projects, it has held a Christmas Party for some inmates of the Monson Hospital.

For many years our Union has maintained a reading group to stimulate good reading habits among its members. At the present time this activity is quite popular. We have also contributed to the "Second Mile" since it became a Church Women's Project.

In making such a report as this we must not forget the wonderful private gifts our church has received thru members of the Women's Union. These have included the providing and installation of lights in both vestries, an electric stove, silver, the brass set of very beautiful candlesticks, cross and vases for the Sanctuary, a blower for one of the furnaces, and many other smaller gifts. And so the work of the Union has gone on.

In 1956 the Women's Union realized that its services were not so much needed for our own selves as they were for others. So we presented a plan to the church to turn over our well-organized supper and dining-room committees for home services. The Women's Union could then devote its efforts to various parish projects as well as the missionary work. This took place and was accepted by the church at its annual meeting of January, 1956.

We are now a union of women who are members of "The Hampshire District Fellowship of Congregational Christian Women", who are in turn members of "The Massachusetts Fellowship of Congregational Christian Women". This same organization is a part of the

The Women's Union (cont.)

National Fellowship, which makes us all members of the International Fellowship. So we can all worship together, and sing together, each in her own tongue:

"In Christ there is no east no west
In Him no south no north
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth."

May we live on, and serve for many more years, and be deserving of our great heritage.

The Men's Club of
The First Congregational Church
by
George Pratt

The Men's Club of The First Congregational Church of Hadley, commonly known and referred to as The Hadley Men's Club, was founded on November 24, 1911. Its object then as now was to "secure a better acquaintance among the men of the church and community and to promote a more active interest in all that concerns the welfare of the town". Men sixteen years of age and over, approved by the Executive Committee and willing to sign the Constitution, have always been eligible for membership. The fact that the Constitution has remained virtually intact since its inception, brings to mind the thought and careful planning that was put into organizing this club. How well it has stood the test of time is borne out by the fact that it is the oldest community service club in continuous service in the town today.

It was patterned after the Edwards Church Club of Northampton and the Hatfield Church Club. Homer Phillips, and Oscar Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer since 1942, are the two charter members still active. Membership has grown from the original forty-six to the present roster of one hundred and forty-three.

In its beginning years it was customary to have a short business meeting followed by entertainment which often consisted of a lecture by a prominent man from the surrounding area. How keenly the club was

interested in topics of the day is shown in the records of the third meeting when the group heard a talk on the "high cost of living", a subject just as pertinent today. After the entertainment, coffee and doughnuts were served by Mrs. John E. Morse who ran a tearoom called The Brick Oven.

A small group shared the expenses of each meeting, and it is from this system that our present "band" method has developed. We now have six bands each of which is responsible for putting on a supper once during the fiscal year, which runs from October through April. The last meeting is Ladies' Night.

In recent years each band may be justly proud of the fame to which they have contributed for appetizing and delicious suppers served by the Hadley Men's Club. Visiting guests have attested to the pleasure which they have found in sharing the spirit of fellowship in so satisfactory a manner, and their remarks have been recorded in the minutes of meetings through the years.

There were many non-church-goers among the early club members, and these frowned upon ministers as speakers. They even went so far as to omit from the minutes any mention of these infrequent occurrences. They did, however, listen enthusiastically to anyone who gave a talk on an important world issue. In scanning the records we find also various incidents which, although amusing to us now, held top priority in the business of their day. One such was the adopted Resolution dated May 8, 1919, to be sent to Washington, protesting against Daylight Saving. Here again we see the active interest taken by the

The Men's Club of the First Church (cont.)

members in affairs of both national and local importance.

Resignations occurred because of the fact that some posteriors were not in accord with the odd angles of the chairs, being more accustomed to those of a saddle. We find also that there were some who resigned because of their objection to smoking. The Hartsbrook band are on record as being the first to serve cigars after the supper. Those now accustomed to this as a regular procedure, find it hard to understand the censure caused by this event.

In a lighter vein, but nonetheless, serious were the protests against women being allowed in the meetings. Indeed some of the men refused to attend "Ladies' Night" claiming that the ladies should not be a part of a men's club. The vote to exclude them was later rescinded and the women are most cordially welcome.

Reading back through the years we find that the club keeps up with current events as each major catastrophe or important world happening is invariably brought before the group by people well-versed in that particular subject. The members are not only interested in community affairs, but in those reaching into distant lands as well. On that score the club is very fortunate in being located in this area where there are experts in so many fields. We are grateful for those who contribute so generously of their time and effort.

We are proud of our ability to donate generously to all drives for funds. The First World War found the club spear-heading drives for the Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A., in amounts up to five hundred

dollars in some cases. When Hadley had a Boy Scout troop, we supported it liberally.

Omit the sentence about the Boy Scout....

Add:

1959 will find the Men's Club still proud of the ideals of its Constitution and carrying on the traditions of active participation in all that which concerns the welfare of Hadley.

THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

by James Kentfield

The Second Congregational Church in Hadley developed from a Sabbath School which was organized during the summers of 1820 to 1824 and 1826 by assistants of the Hadley pastor, Mr. Woodbridge. Seven years later the Hadley Mills Sabbath association was set up "for the purpose of aiding in the establishment and more vigorous operation of the Sabbath School system of instruction in this neighborhood, being considered as a branch of the Hadley Sabbath School association."

Meetings of Sabbath School and Society were held at the schoolhouse which was located across the street from the driveway leading to the former parsonage. During this period adults continued to attend Church in Hadley.

Following the formation of the Society, several professors from Amherst College supplemented the Sabbath School with preaching services. One of these men was Professor Worcester. It was particularly due to his influence that in March, 1830, the Congregational Trinitarian Society of Hadley Upper Mills was formed.

The church was organized October 18, 1831, by twenty-four men and women who took their letters from the first church in Hadley after a unanimous vote of that church. Twenty-one others became members the following year.

The Church was well established when Rev. Mr. Payson became

the supply minister. The original schoolhouse had been replaced in 1825 by a new two-room school with a small hall above. It was in this hall that the first religious meetings were held, the Sabbath met, the society and the church was organized, and services held.

In May 1833, a committee on enlarging the schoolhouse reported not in favor of it but recommended the building of a meeting-house. The building was completed at a cost of $3,000.00 and was dedicated in November 1834.

Rev. Ebenezer Brown and Rev. David Hunn followed Mr. Payson as ministers. It was a period of great spiritual and physical activity. The Second Trinitarian Society was incorporated, the Church interior completed, the pews sold, the cellar bid off for the stabling of horses during services, and a bell hung in the belfry. The Elias Hibbard place was purchased and the parsonage buildings erected. At this point Rev. Warren H. Beaman began his thirty-two year ministry.

During financial prosperity, additions were made to church property. The steeple was built in 1854, and the Choir house was added. The Johnson Organ was installed in 1866. This was the 202nd instrument built by William A. Johnson of Westfield, Massachusetts. The horse sheds were built soon afterwards.

Starting in 1872 there followed a four year period of hard

times. Rev. James Bell and Rev. H. M. Kellogg were ministers at the time.

In 1877 Rev. John Lane of Whately became pastor of the Church. He served thirty-three years. In 1888 the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor was organized and held the interest of the young people for many years. In 1892 the parish, or society, and church became one. Mr. Lane was a pillar of strength to the church and many physical improvements were made during his ministry. In 1895 land for a chapel was acquired. The stone wall was laid next to the pond and the horse sheds moved back. Mr. Lane helped plan, and directed the building of Bartlett Chapel in 1898 as well as doing a great deal of physical labor on it. Next a sum of $1500 was raised for major repairs on the church sanctuary. In 1909, after a year of renovation the rededication of the church was held. The unsafe steeple had been repaired, the roof recovered, a metal ceiling put up in the sanctuary, the walls painted pink and green, and memorial windows installed. With Mr. Lane's resignation in 1910 another active era ended.

Rev. Owen E. Hardy, Rev. Charles Hill and Rev. E. P. Blackmer became ministers in that succession. In 1913 the church was wired for electricity. Starting in 1915 morning services were held in Bartlett Chapel on cold winter mornings. The memorial

tablet in the Chapel entry was erected in 1916. In August 1918, Miss Annie Kentfield was commissioned as a missionary to China under the American Board. On June 27, 1931 under the direction of the minister, the Rev. Frederick N. Rutan and Mrs. Rutan, this church celebrated its 100th anniversary. Mr. Rutan passed away in May, 1932. In December 1932 Rev. Ellery C. Clapp became our minister.

The next October Rev. Francis A. Drake began his pastorate and was ordained here on June 1, 1934. He was our last resident minister. Mr. Drake helped form and direct the Pelham Rural Fellowship which is a group of rural churches and ministers. In 1935 Mrs. Drake organized and directed a local group of the Girl Reserves, a branch of the Y.W.C.A. A club room above the chapel was built and furnished through her efforts. Stewardships of the soil greatly interested Mr. Drake and the Lord's Acre at the rear of the parsonage was dedicated "for the work of the Lord, for the building of His Church, and for the extention of God's Kingdom throughout the world." Here potatoes were raised cooperatively by young and old. In June 1938 Mr. Drake was bid farewell when he resigned to go to California.

The following October Charles G. McCormick, who was assistant in the department of religion at Amherst College became acting pastor. Mr. McCormick returned to North Hadley

for his ordination to the Christian Ministry in October 1944. In September 1939, Mr. Drake returned from California and the Church became engaged in restoring the Sanctuary. An electric organ blower was given and installed, a new metal roof was built, the interior was painted and the old chandelier was restored and electrified. The pulpit became an altar and was moved to the rear of the platform and a new lectern and pulpit were constructed. The organ pipes were covered with red material to match the reredos behind the altar and new red carpeting was installed. The rededication took place on June 15, 1941. In January 1943 Mr. Drake resigned as pastor of this church. In July of that year the parsonage was rented and in 1946 was sold.

Prior to the calling of our next pastor, a momentous decision was reached. Our Church voted to yoke with the North Congregational Church in Amherst. Responsibilities were to be proportionate to membership and North Amherst was to supply the parsonage. The first minister under the yoking plan was Dr. H. Robinson Shipherd who came in May 1943. During Dr. Shipherd's ministry here Miss Saidie A. Hibbard was Commissioned on June 23, 1944 by the American Board as a missionary to the Near East Mission. For five years Miss Hibbard served with devotion as Superintendent of Nursing and Nursing Service at the Azariah

Smith Hospital in Gaziantep, Turkey. Dr. Shipherd left this church on October 1, 1948.

Rev. Eugene Biddle, an instructor at Deerfield Academy became acting minister until May 1949 when Rev. Howard F. Boardman became pastor. The Boardmans left on February 14, 1954 and on March 1st of that year the Rev. Gover C. Rieger started his ministry. Rev. Rieger had served as Chaplain in the U. S. Army of Occupation in Germany before returning to a parish in Eastern Massachusetts.

On October 28, 1956 the Second Congregational Church of Hadley celebrated her 125th anniversary with an appropriate program. The celebration began with the morning worship service which was followed by a luncheon. An informal hour included historical highlights and anecdotes, greetings from former members and friends and recognition of special guests. A memorial visit to the village cemetery with a brief program and prayers was followed by the formal anniversary program in the church sanctuary. This included a musical prelude consisting of solos and choir selections and a speaking program with Rev. Donald J. Tamblyn, associate professor of Religion at Mt. Holyoke College giving the address of the afternoon, "Looking Before and After."

Rev. Rieger stayed until September 1957 when he was called to organize a new church in Bethesda, Maryland. Upon his

resignation, Rev. William Lorimer was called and began his pastorate on January 1, 1958. During that summer the sanctuary was again redecorated.

No history of the North Hadley church would be complete without the mention of the Ladies Aid Society. The present women's organization of the church was formed in 1879 as a "North Hadley Sewing Circle," having for its object "the pecuniary aid of the parish." The name was changed to Ladies Aid Society in 1901. This organization has been very active during most of the years of its existence, both in rendering financial assistance to the church and in providing educational and inspiring meetings and speakers for the women of the church and community.

Most of the facts in this historical sketch were taken from material contained in a special booklet compiled and printed for the 125th anniversary of the Second Congregational Church. Copies of the booklet will be available to interested persons at the Hadley Tercentenary Celebration.

The English Speaking Roman
Catholic Church

Florence Burke

St. John's of Hadley

Shortly after the first quarter of the nineteenth century had elapsed, a heavy immigration of people from Ireland took place. Leaving their native country to better themselves economically, a goodly number chose Hadley as their second home.

During those early years, the precious heritage of their Catholic faith was nurtured and fostered by parishes from ~~the then~~ distant Hartford in 1834, Chicopee 1841, Holyoke 1856 and nearby Northampton in 1866. Religious fervor was kept burning brightly during these periods by zealous men and women, who conducted religious instruction classes for the youth, then being reared in an atmosphere of intolerance and misunderstanding. Interest in religion was keen. ~~and~~ Older members of St. John's have recalled contests with like classes in Northampton, to test their knowledge of Christ and his Church.

"McCoy's History of the Catholic Church in the Springfield Diocese", relates that Fr. Tilton of Hartford, later founder of Holy Cross College in Worcester, visted Northampton in 1834. At that time the Catholic population of Northampton and Hadley numbered about 150 persons. Seven years later, Rev. John D. Brady of the then

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established parish in Chicopee ministered to the Catholics in the area and after his decease was succeeded successively by Rev. James Str in and Rev. William Blenkensap.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the center of all Catholic worship, was offered for the first time in Hadley in 1856, with Rev. James O'Sullivan officiating. Travelling still by stagecoach, Fr. O'Sullivan or Rev. Jeremiah O'Calloghan of Holyoke celebrated Mass whenever possible in the home of John McGrath on Bay Road. Later a more central point was chosen and the faithful gathered as ~~occasion~~ occasion offered, to give honor and praise to God in the residence of David Foley, at the northern end of West Street.

During the pastorate of Fr. O'Sullivan, in the year 1858, the present St. Mary's Cemetery in Northampton was established, replacing the earlier churchyard adjoining the original Church of St. John the Baptist, erected by Fr. Brady in 1844 and located on King Street. Twelve years later a Catholic burial ground was consecrated by Archbishop Williams within the Hadley township, known then as now as St. Brigid's Cemetery and supervised by St. Brigid's Church in Amherst. While both consecrated sections have become the last earthly resting place of members of St. John's parish, the far greater percentage lie interred in the blessed ground dedicated to the Mother of God under her title of St. Mary's of the Assumption, in Northampton.

In January 1866 a parish was established in Northampton with Rev. P. V. Moyce as Pastor. During that period the Catholics of Hadley journeyed, if necessary on foot, to the greatly enlarged church on King Street, in order that they might "keep holy the Lord's Day".

Six years later St. Brigid's parish in Amherst was created, the church having been dedicated a year previously. Hadley became a Mission of that parish, with services held in Amherst and except for the interval occurring between 1878-1887, when both Amherst and Hadley were again affiliated with Northampton with Rev. M. E. Barry as pastor, during which time the present St. Mary's Church, on Elm Street was erected, St. John's remained a part of St. Brigid's of Amherst.

With the gradual increase in numbers, swelled in part by the immigration of people of French extraction, services were again held within the township. In 1872 with Rev. Francis Brennan ~~then~~ pastor, Holy Mass was celebrated regularly each Sunday in the Town Hall. When construction work prevented the use of that building for a period, the first floor of the First Congregational Church was graciously made available for Sunday services by the members of that Congregation. Eight years later Fr. Brennan was succeeded by Rev. John B. Drennan, who remained until 1891.

Shortly after the dawn of the twentieth century a burning desire to have a permanent place of worship

in Hadley was realized. In 1902 with Rev. John H. Gavin as Pastor, the present St. John's Church was built and in 1903, amidst great rejoicing, was dedicated by Most Rev. Thomas D. Beaven, D. D. Bishop of Springfield. Ten years later ~~was~~ a large celebration was held to commemorate the anniversary of that dedication.

Rev. John J. Bell followed Fr. Gavin in 1911, to be the last non-resident Pastor of St. John's.

At last the hopes and aspirations of more than half a century were realized! In July 1915, Hadley ceased to be a mission church and St. John's was established as a separate parish with Rev. Cornelius F. Donoghue as its first resident pastor, the Crosier property on Middle Street having been purchased for rectory purposes. At last Christ in the Blessed Sacrament was enthroned permanently on the altar of St. John's, branches of the Holy Name Society and Blessed Virgin Sodality were erected and the nearly half century of parish life now so proudly recalled, commenced. At the same time, Holy Rosary Parish was created to care for the large number of Polish people then settled in Hadley, who still wished to make use of their mother tongue.

Fr. Donoghue served as pastor until 1922 and was followed in succession by Rev. Arthur E. Sheedy (1922-1928), Rev. Walter T. Hogan (1928-1931), Rev. Frank C. Burns (1931-1939), Rev. Angustine B. O'Grady (1939-1942), Rev. Patrick T. Long (1942-1944), Rev. Hugh M. Curran

(1944-1948), Rev. Gordon A. Dowd (1948-1951), Rev. Edmund F. Curran (1951-1954), and the present Pastor, Rev. John B. Hughes.

Though the interior of the church building still presents much the same appearance as when constructed in 1902, many improvements have been made during the different pastorates. Inwardly the church has been entirely redecorated and the altar redesigned to conform with liturgical standards. A modern electric organ has proven a great aid in supplementing the beautiful liturgy of the Church. The original imported stained glass windows with their lovely symbolic medallions, memorials of families closely identified with St. John's at the turn of the century are in the process of renovation. Heavy carpeting has replaced earlier aisle covering and the church is believed to be one of the few in New England to boast this aid to a quiet and peaceful atmosphere, so desired in a house of God.

As in the early days, volunteer teachers still aid in the Religious Instruction Classes. However, the teaching staff has been augmented by members of the Daughters of the Divine Heart of Mary from the Marian Retreat House in Holyoke, assuring the present generations of a well rounded appreciation of their Catholic Faith. Supplementing these classes is a Study Club for adults, sponsored by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

Through the years various get-togethers have cemented a unity of purpose among the congregation of St. John's. The large Fair held in conjunction with the

building of the church, the Chicken Pie Suppers and New England Dinners of a later period down to the recent Country Auction have served the dual purpose of raising needed funds and renewing ties with the area parishes, so helpful in the early days of the Church in Hadley.

Over the years, like Mary of old, four members of St. John's have chosen the better part. During the mission days of the church, Miss Margaret Lyons embraced the religious life, to be followed by Miss Alice Coffey. Known in religion as Sr. Justitia, Miss Coffey became one of the foremost educators in the parochial school system in the United States and served as the first president of Mundelein College in Chicago. The two living members of the parish dedicated in a special way to the service of God are Miss Flora Pichette and Mr. Edward Duffy. Miss Pichette, who became a member of the Sisters of the Holy Eucharist, soon after St. John's reached parish status, now lives in retirement, as Sr. Vincent of the Holy Eucharist, at the Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, Washington. A monk of the Benedictine Order and known as Bro. Lawrance, Mr. Duffy is pursuing a life of prayer and service at Mount Saviour Monastery at Elmira, New York.

St. John's Church has been a landmark on Russell Street for the past fifty-six years. The parish named in honor of the "beloved disciple", though the smallest

in the Springfield Diocese, still reflects the elevation and zeal of that small group of men and women, who having put "first things first" regardless of the sacrifice involved, erected for the honor and glory of God, the Church of St. John the Evangelist, in Hadley.

HOLY ROSARY CHURCH IN HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS

Reverend Aloysius A. Budnik

The history of the Holy Rosary Church in Hadley, Massachusetts, cannot be told adequately unless it is projected against the background of the people it now serves and by whom and for whom it was originally founded. Perhaps more than any other ethnic group that has settled America, the Poles and their faith are inextricably linked; you cannot speak of the Pole without speaking of his faith and you cannot speak of his church without speaking of his people.

The first public record of the presence of Poles in the Northampton area was the story in the Northampton Gazette, December 7, 1886, telling of a Professor Podgorski who was granted a patent July 20, 1886 for a drawing machine which he manufactured at the Carr Block in Northampton and for which he filled 300 orders that year. The Boston Globe in 1898 placed the arrival of the first group of Poles into the Valley at about 1885.(1) Most of those who settled in Hadley came from Liziansk, in the southern part of Poland, then occupied by Austria.

Like their predecessors who migrated from Wethersfield, Connecticut, to Norwottuck, now Hadley, to seek religious freedom, the Poles also left their fatherland to seek religious and political liberty as well as economic independence. Many of them came under contract originally arranged for by Charles Parsons of Northampton and Francis Clapp of South Deerfield, who acted as agents for the

The history of the Polish colony through its parishes, Massachusetts, cannot be told adequately unless it is projected against the background of the people it now serves and by whom and for [illegible]

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[illegible]

Connecticut, to Newburgh, New Hadley, to seek religious freedom, the Poles also left their fatherland to seek religious and political liberty as well as economic independence. Many of them came under contract, originally arranged for by Theodor Parsons of Northampton and Francis Clapp of South Deerfield, who acted as agents for the

local farmers looking for skilled farm help. The terms of the agreement were usually to repay the passage money by working eight months of the year together with their families for the total sum of eighty dollars or ten dollars per family per month. Survival in the winter months without work or pay was left to individual ingenuity in the face of obvious hardship. In spite of the hardship, the immigrants stayed.

Soon middlemen like Parsons and Clapp were eliminated and the new settlers made their own contacts for their friends and relatives across the water. Two former New England farmers, tycoon Marshall Field and publisher Stuart Appleton, contributed to the influx of the new settlers into the Valley in the early 1900's by advertising the agricultural and industrial resources of New England throughout Europe. Their efforts were responsible for one hundred and six thousand immigrants to America in 1901 alone. By 1902 Northampton had 500 to 600 Polish settlers, Hadley had 400 and Hatfield 200. (2)

The Valley area raised mostly onions and tobacco. Entire families of Poles worked in the fields. They saved their money and bought land and more land. Oftentimes the land they bought was considered useless, such as stump-filled timberland. Even before 1900 they employed new techniques such as dynamiting to clear woodland to grow a crop of onions that often would pay for the cost of the land in one season.

By 1903 the natives became alarmed over the "Polish Peril",

accusing "the invadors of buying up our land and showing the old settlers how to work them. Whey they do not own land they rent and raise onions and tobacco."(3) By 1912 there were 2500 farms owned by Poles in the upper Connecticut Valley. The rejuvenation of the agricultural industry by the new settlers created a land boom. Prices of onion land jumped to $300 per acre. By 1914 onion acreage went from $500 to $1000 per acre. Only fifteen years before this, tobacco land sold from only $35 to $50 per acre, whereas onion land now leased for $50 per acre per year.

Those were years of long and hard hours of labor in the effort to stake out a place for themselves in the new world. What they gained they paid for dearly. Sometimes some families, in their ardor to overcome great odds, sacrificed the education of their children in order to have more manpower on the land. Those with greater foresight strained all of their resources to give their children the best and highest education at their command. As a rule, they outworked and outbid their competitors. They would pay $1000 to $1200 a year towards a mortgaged farm, whereas a native would pay only $300 per year. "Their indomitable courage and industry is comparable only to the pioneer spirit of the early settlers," said the Northampton Gazette in 1909.(4) The local newspaper describes the average new settler with the words "keenly intelligent, practical talent, sound judgment. He is not only restoring the productiveness of the soil but doubling its value and largely increasing the wealth of the Connecticut Valley."(5) In

accuracy "the business of breaking up our land and showing the old settlers how to work like . They they do not own land they rent and raise onions and tobacco."(3). By 1912 there were 2,000 farms owned by whites in the upper Connecticut Valley. The replacement of the traditional industry by the new settlers created a land boom. Prices of onion land jumped to $300 per acre. By 1911 onion acreage went from $50 to $100 per acre. Only fifteen years before this, tobacco land sold from only $25 to $50 per acre, whereas onion land now leased for $40 per acre per year.

These were years of long and hard hours of labor in an effort to carve out a place for themselves in the new world. Then they gained body and lost loyalty. Sometimes some families, in their anger to overcome great odds, sacrificed the education of their [illegible] in order to have more manpower on the farm. Those with greater foresight utilized all of their resources to give their children the best and highest education at their command. In a [illegible], they overtaken and outsold their competitors. They would pay $100 to $150 a year towards a mortgaged farm, whereas a native would pay only $50 per year. "Their thoughtful courage and in-

[illegible] in 1904.(4) The local

actual fact, statistics show that the value of the soil had multiplied by a factor of twenty from 1900 to 1915.

The difficulties, hardships and heartaches that accompany all pioneering was the lot of each family that struck new roots in the land of freedom. They did not consist merely of those problems which could be solved by incessant labor, industry and thrift, but also others that lay in barriers of language, in strangeness of customs and in the lack of understanding by their neighbors. Although "his ambition was not to antagonize but to harmonize"(6) the new settler was often ill received. Mary K. Brewster, writing for the Boston Globe in 1911 speaks of the "ignorant prejudice" that existed against the Poles.(7) All of these difficulties and hardships taken together accented the meaning and the value that the new settler placed upon his faith and his church. It was there that he sought understanding and there he found solace and comfort; there he could invoke the God of his fathers and come to feel at home in a strange new land. It was said, "the Pole is loyal to the Roman Catholic Church. This feeling of loyalty to the faith that they have is not to be trifled with."(8)

Against this background it was only natural that the new immigrant should seek to build a temple of his own as soon as he was able where he could worship his God. Before he was able to do this, he had his spiritual wants cared for by the Catholic churches nearest to him. Those in Amherst and North Hadley went to St. Brigid's and those in Hadley, for the most part, went to St. Mary's in

Northampton. In 1902, when St. John's of Hadley was established, they helped to build it and many of them, even today, belong to St. John's in Hadley and to St. Brigid's in Amherst. Many others, however, longed for a church where they would again hear the prayers and the hymns which they said and sang since they were children. In 1904 the St. John Cantius Church was founded in Northampton and their dream seemed to be realized. Their growing numbers in the town of Hadley and the problem of distance made them determined, however, that they would have a church of their own in Hadley.

Their first practical effort to make this dream come true was on March 29, 1909, when a committee of Poles in Hadley paid $50 as a deposit to the Russell Society for the old Russell Church which was then located where the present fire barn now stands. The understanding was that the full price for the property would be $2000. Strong opposition to the sale arose from the owners of the Elmwood Hotel who feared that they would lose their liquor license if the Russell Church, long unused for church purposes, would revert back to religious use. The newspapers captioned the story as the battle between "Rum and Religion".(9)

It would be interesting at this point to recall that the Russell Church building was the fourth structure to be erected in Hadley for the worship of God. According to Judd's History of Hadley, they did not call these buildings churches in the old days but only "Meeting Houses"(10) since they were not restricted and

dedicated to the exclusive use of religious worship but served also for other community, social and civil activities. The First Meeting House was ordered at a town meeting on December 12, 1661, and was completed on January 12, 1670. It was located at the western end of the present West Street. It was replaced by the Second Meeting House in 1714, also on West Street. The Third Meeting House was started in 1806 and was completed in 1808. This last building was named the First Church (Congregational) and was moved from the West Street site to the present Middle Street location in 1840 when that part of town began to expand. The West Street residents objected to this moving and formed the Russell Society on January 15, 1841, (11) named after Parson John Russell, who first led his Wethersfield followers to settle Hadley in 1659.

The early historians do not mention directly when the Russell Church was built. A later historian, Clifton Johnson, in 1932 said that it was built in 1842. (12) This is probably based upon the fact that it is known that its first minister, John Woodbridge was installed as the first pastor there on February 16, 1842.(13) An article in the local paper in 1908 states that the Russell Church was "dedicated" in 1842.(14) In 1909, testimony in a probate court action regarding the ownership of the Russell Church property states that "Chester Gaylord deeded the property to the Russell Meeting House in 1842 on the condition that the building be used as a church." The church, therefore, existed before the land on which it was built was deeded formally to it. Walker states

dedicated to the exclusive use of religious worship but served also for other community, social and civil activities. The First Lutheran House was organized at a town meeting on December 12, 1881, and was completed on January 12, 1882. It was located at the northern end of the present West Street. It was replaced by the second Lutheran House in 1911, also on West Street. The Third Lutheran House was started in 1960 and was completed in 1962. The last building was named the First Church (Congregational) and was moved from the West Street site to the present Middle School location in 1980 when that part of town began to expand. The West Street meeting house was sold to the Russell Society on January 11, 1881. (11) named after Reverend John Russell, who first led his Congregational

The early histories do not mention directly when the

1992 said that it was built in 1882. (12) This is probably based upon the fact that it is known that the first minister, John Moonbridge was installed as the first pastor there on January 11, 1882. (13) [illegible]

a probate court action regarding the ownership of the Russell Church [illegible]

that "its pews, built by individuals, are today the property of descendants, so that the building cannot be sold though it has long been closed for church purposes."(11) It was the custom in those days to finance the building of churches by buying pews and since there were over 100 of these original pew owners, who built their own pews, this with the structure itself must have taken some time. And although the Russell Church was not as elaborate or as large as the First Church, which took two years to construct, it is virtually certain, considering the above facts, that it must have been started soon after the organization of the Russell Society on July 15, 1841, in order to be sufficiently complete for the installation of its first pastor on February 16, 1842. With the completion date set at 1842, the former Russell Church, which is now the Holy Rosary Church, is most probably the oldest church building in use in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield.

And now back to the story of the attempts to acquire the Russell Church-or-the battle between "Rum and Religion". The owners of the Elmwood Hotel were quite successful in marshalling opposition to the sale of the Russell Church to the Poles. They cast doubt on the title of ownership by the Russell Society of the property in question. They contended and rightly so, as we saw earlier from the statements of Walker, that the property was owned not by the Russell Society but by the people who paid for the land and church by buying pews or at least by their descendants.

Another claimant for the title of the property arose in the

that "its pews, built by individuals, are today the property of descendants, so that the building cannot be sold though it has long been closed for church purposes."(12) It was the orders in [illegible] their own pews, this with the structure itself must have taken some time. And although the Russell Church was not as elaborate or as [illegible] have been started soon after the ordination of the Russell Society on July 15, 1841, in order to be sufficiently complete for the installation of its first pastor on February 1, 1842. With the consecration date set at 1842, the former Russell Church, which is now the Holy Rosary Church, is most probably the oldest church building in use in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield.

Russell Church-or-the battle between "Sun and Reflection". The orders of the Hillwood Hotel were quite successful in marshalling opposition on the ethic of ownership by the Russell Society of the property [illegible]. [illegible] the statements of Miller, that the property was owned not by the [illegible]

person of George H. Gaylord. In a probate court session presided over by Judge Bassett, Mr. Gaylord claimed that the title reverted back to him due to unfulfilled conditions in the deed "as a descendant of Chester Gaylord who deeded the property to the Russell Meeting House in 1842 on the condition that the building be used as a church." The Russell Society, on the other hand, claimed that Mr. Gaylord lost rights to the title since he had previously deeded away those rights to the committee.(16)

There were some justification in Mr. Gaylord's claim since the building indeed had been used for other than church purposes for some time. The local paper stated that the church was abandoned in 1882 when the West Street group became reconciled with the Middle Street parties and returned to the First Church. The Russell Church was used once a year for church services until 1892 in order to be exempt from taxes. It was then rented to a commercial firm which used it for storage of grain, cement, fertilizer and so forth. The article describes it as being in a general state of disrepair.(17) Judge Bassett reserved his decision in the case of Gaylord vs. the Russell Church Society. Meanwhile, another probate court action against the Russell Society was taken by the descendants of the pew owners or their trustees.

It can be seen from all this opposition to the establishment of this church that the spiritual growth of the new settlers came just as hard and involved as great a struggle and often disappointment and defeat as did their battle for life on the land.

person of course c. [illegible]. In a previous court [illegible]

[illegible] to [illegible] conditions in the [illegible] "as a

descendant of [illegible] who deeded the property to the

Russell Testing House in 1882 on the condition that the building

be used as a church." The Russell Society, on the other hand,

claimed that Mr. Sayford [illegible] to the title since he had

previously deeded away [illegible] to the committee.(15)

There were [illegible] in Mr. Sayford's claim since

the building [illegible] had been used for other than church purposes

for some time. The Local Court ruled that [illegible] was [illegible]

in 1882 when the last church [illegible] meetings with the little

church [illegible] to the Third Church. The Russell

Church was [illegible] a place for church services until 1892 in order

to be exempt from taxes. It was then rented to a [illegible]

which used it for storage of grain, [illegible], fertilizer and so forth.

The article describes it as being in a general state of disrepair.(17)

[illegible] the Sayford property [illegible] the case of Sayford vs. the

Russell Testing House. [illegible]

against the Russell Society was taken by the descendants of the

[illegible].

In this controversy it is not known whether the townspeople sided on the part of "Rum or Religion" but sufficient is the fact that the probate court on May 27, 1909, decided the title in favor of the descendants or trustees of the original pew owners of the Russell Church. The trustees in turn quietly sold the property in question, not to the committee of Poles, but to one Myron C. Bailey, who in turn sold it to the Elmwood Hotel.

It is important to note that the decree in favor of the trustees was rendered on May 27, 1909 and that the property was sold to Myron C. Bailey very soon after, on June 7, 1909, but that the transaction was not recorded in the Registry of Deeds until March 23, 1910,(18) when the deed was simultaneously transferred to Edward Lyons, the owner of the Elmwood Hotel, for an undisclosed sum, or as the transaction states "for one dollar and other valuable considerations".(18) It could be presumed that the transaction was kept secret until some of the feeling about this controversy died down in the town.

There are several things worthy of interest in the wording of this transaction which will bear full quotation.

"(I) Francis S. Reynolds, trustee under John R. Gates, surviving trustee by virtue of a decree and license granted to me on May 27, 1909, by Probate Court for County of Hampshire in the case of Francis S. Reynolds, trustee against the Russell Church et al. in consideration of $2000 paid by Myron C. Bailey of Northampton release all parcel of land known as Russell Church

In this conveyance it is not known whether the transpeople acted on the part of "Tom or Dick or Harry" but certainly is the fact that the property rights on May 27, 1907, occupied the title in favor of the successors or trustees of the original proprietors of the Russell Church. The trustees in turn properly sold the property by auction, not to the congregation of Tabernacle to the figure C. Bailey, who in turn sold it to the Elmwood Hotel.

It is important to note that the deeds in favor of the trustees was recorded on May 27, 1907 and that the property was sold to Byron C. Bailey very soon after, on June 7, 1907, but that the transaction was not recorded in the Registry of Deeds until March 23, 1910.(14) When the case was simultaneously transferred to Edwin Lyons, the owner of the Elmwood Hotel, for an undisclosed sum, or as the transaction states "for one dollar and other valuable considerations".(15) It could be surmised that the transaction was kept secret until some of the feeling about this conversion, [illegible] was all over.

There are several things worthy of interest in the worship of this transaction which will have full consideration.

[illegible] . [illegible] , [illegible] , 1907, by [illegible] [illegible] Charles S. [illegible] , [illegible] [illegible] . In consideration [illegible] .

lot. It is stipulated that the bell which is in the belfry on the building does not belong with the church property and is not sold, but may be left there for a reasonable time and used by the public in some proper manner to be agreed upon for the purposes of the fire alarm.

"It is further stipulated that memoranda and records reputed to have been placed under the southwest cornerstone, will, if changes are made so that it can be done without inconvenience, be saved by the purchaser and delivered to the proper authorities of the Parish of the Russell Society without expense or change." Signed, Francis S. Reynolds, trustee, June 7, 1909. (Recorded in the Registry of Deeds March 23, 1910.) (18)

It is believed that the bell referred to in that deed is now the one that hangs in the tower of the present fire house on West Street. It is not known if the documents, "memoranda and records" were ever found and turned over to the Russell Society. So closed the first chapter in the efforts of the Polish people to have a church of their own in Hadley.

Struggles and obstacles, however, were a part of their lives and they did not give up the battle. Like their Polish neighbors in nearby Northampton, Easthampton and Hatfield, the Poles of Hadley organized mutual aid and sickness benefit societies among themselves even before their church was established. The first such group was the Society of St. Joseph which was founded about 1911. With the advent of this first effort at organization,

the people soon sent delegations to Bishop Beaven to petition for a Polish priest to take care of their spiritual needs.

There were very few Polish speaking priests at that time since they came in small numbers as refugees from their native land. It would take many, many years to develop native vocations to the priesthood.

In May of 1913, Bishop Beaven sent Reverend Julius Jaworek as an assistant to Father John J. Bell at St. Brigid's in Amherst to serve the needs of the Polish people. Father Jaworek said Mass for his people in North Hadley at the old school hall, where Mass is still said each Sunday, and also a Mass at St. John's Church for the people of Hadley. With the coming of Father Jaworek, the new settlers of Hadley began to take on the character of a social unit. Up to this time theirs had been a life of rugged individualism, but now they had a clear and common goal and with Father Jaworek at their head, their efforts were again renewed to establish a church of their own.

By the middle of October, 1914, Father Jaworek moved into a rented apartment at 95 Russell Street, owned at present by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Niedbala, formerly by the Klimoski family. He reopened negotiations for the purchase of the Russell Church. The growth of his people was such that he made arrangements to use the Town Hall for saying Mass in Hadley. The First Church on Middle Street also opened its doors to the newly formed parish for use for many a social event.

the people from very early times to Hanoy Heaven to petition for a Polish priest to take care of their spiritual needs.

There were very few Polish speaking priests at that time [illegible] Iowa. It would take many years to develop native vocations to the priesthood.

In June of 1882, Father Seven sent Lawrence Stefan Zawacki as an assistant to Father John J. Hall at St. Mary's in Muscatine to serve the needs of the Polish people. Father Zawacki said Mass for his people in North Bridge at the old Colonial Hall, where Mass is still said each Sunday, and also a Mass at St. Joseph's Church for the people of Wedge. With the coming of Father Zawacki, the new activities of Harley began to take on the character of a social unit. Up to this time there had been a life of marked individualism, but now they had a clear and common goal and with Father Zawacki at their head, their efforts were again renewed to establish a church of their own.

In the middle of October, 1882, Father Zawacki moved into a rented apartment at 92 Mussell St. and, owned at present by [illegible]

In the meantime the Russell Church had a new owner. Edward Lyons, who had purchased it March 23, 1910, died in 1912. His nephew, Martin E. Lyons of Hatfield and Nellie M. Lyons, inherited the Elmwood Hotel and the Russell Church. They sold these properties to Mary A. Lyons April 10, 1915.(19) Negotiations were successfully concluded with the new owner and the Russell Church was purchased by Father Jaworek in the latter part of August in 1915, with the proviso that it be moved from the West Street site. Financial parish records show that the original offer of $2000 made in 1909 still held, though the land was not included in the transaction. A little earlier that same month, August 11, 1915, Father Jaworek purchased the present rectory and site of the Holy Rosary Church from Dr. Herbert L. Johnson.(20) A few years later he purchased the property on Huntington Road and established the Holy Rosary Cemetery.

When we think of the sale price of the Russell Church, it appears to be ridiculously low today, but we must remember that it was no longer the simple but proud architectural descendant of the traditional New England church it once was. It had been abandoned since 1882 and had been buffeted by storms, changing seasons, and abuse for thirty-three years. It had lost its spire which once reached into the sky pointing to the heavens and was now in a sad state of disrepair, with doors and shutters hanging askew upon rusted and broken hinges.

While it is regrettable that its classic lines as seen

from old photographs were not retained, it was, in 1915, no longer a problem of restoration, but of salvage for use. The church tower was in such poor condition that soon after Mr. Lyons bought the church he had the tower removed for fear it would someday topple down upon his establishment. After the church was moved to Russell Street, it was found that the belfry millwork had rotted completely away and had to be replaced. The whole structure needed reinforcing and overhauling. Considering the fact that the building had to be moved and also the amount of work that had to be done to make it usable, the purchase was not, after all, the bargain that it seems at first hand.

Old photos dating back to about 1880 show that the three large windows on the present east and west sides of the church, which now have stained glass with rounded frames on top, were originally tall rectangular windows with small panes of glass and with shutters on them and these were matched by three other identical windows in the front of the building. Directly underneath these windows around the entire building and of the same width but only half the height, were the windows illuminating the first floor area. The main entrance to the building was by two identical double doors on the first floor in front of the building and underneath each corner window. The spire had an arrow type windvane topping it. The roof of the church was covered with slate. On the original site on West Street there was also a storage and carriage shed built

[illegible] 1d windowsills were not replaced, it was, in 1917, no longer [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] chance he had the lower removed for fear it would somehow break [illegible] upon his celebrity. After the owner was moved to Roswell, it was found that the belfry windows had rotted completely away and had to be replaced. The whole structure needed renovating and overhauling. Somebody did find that the building had to be moved and also the amount of work that had to be done to make it usable, but nothing was done, after all, but surgery that is sure at first hand.

[illegible]

Large windows on the western east and west sides of the church, which had have stained glass with wooden frames on top, were originally tall rectangular windows with small panes of glass and with shutters on them and these were replaced by three other identical windows in the front of the building. Directly underneath these windows around the entire building and of the same width but only half the height, were the windows illuminating the front floor area. The main entrance to the building was by two identical double doors on the first floor in front of the building and underneath each corner window. The entire has an arrow type weathervane topping it. The roof of the church was covered with slate. On the original site on West Second there was also a storage and carriage shed built

out from the back of the building.

It would have cost a fortune to restore the building to its original condition. The only other alternative after it was moved to the present site was to make as efficient and practical use of it as possible. This Father Jaworek did. With a mind to the fundamental importance of education, he transformed the first floor area into four classrooms. The basic structure was reinforced with steel beams and columns. The back of the church which now comprises the sanctuary and sacristies was added on to the building and a new outside front entrance leading directly to the second floor, which is now the church, was built. A steam heating system was installed. The choir left, staircases and organ were put in. A skilled artisan and woodcarver from Poland by the name of Francis Szumal carved and built the three alters. It is undoubtedly due to his influence that the interior of the church has a definite barque flavor which is characteristic of so many churches in Poland. The entire cost of the remodeling project was just under $12,000.

Most of the work described above was not finished until late in 1916. When the first Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was said on the Feast of the Holy Rosary in October, 1915, conditions were still very primitive indeed. The interior and exterior were in the process of repair and rebuilding. The alter was a temporary one and the liturgical ornamentation apart from a crucifix was simply

out from the back of the building.

It would have cost a fortune to restore the building to its original condition. The only other alternative after it was moved to the present site was to make as efficient and practical use of it as possible. This Father Lawerek did. With a mind to the fundamental importance of education, he transformed the first floor area into four classrooms. The basic structure was reinforced with steel beams and columns. The back of the church which now comprises the sanctuary and sacristies was added on to the building and a new outside front entrance leading directly to the second floor, which is now the church, was built. A steam heating system was installed. The choir loft, staircases and organ were put in. A skilled artisan and woodcarver from Poland by the name of Francis Sarzal carved and built the three altars. It is undoubtedly due to his influence that the interior of the church has a distinctive baroque flavor which is characteristic of so many [illegible].

Most of the work described above was not finished until late in 1916. When the first Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was said on the Feast of the Holy Rosary in October, 1916, conditions were [illegible]

an image of Our Lady of Liziansk brought originally from Poland and borrowed from the home of one of the parishioners. A more elaborate image of this same Madonna so dear to the people of Hadley hangs above the main altar during each season of lent even today.

At last the Polish people of Hadley had their own church, their own priest, the singing of their centuries old hymns, at last Hadley for them had become a home.

But a church is not just a building of wood, of brick, or of stone. It goes beyond that which can be seen. It is a thing of the spirit. It penetrates to the depths of the soul. And its story can never be fully told in this life because it reaches unto God Himself, and into the world to be. Of these things angels could speak, not tongues of men.

For who can tell of the miracles wrought upon the human spirit by the grace of God? Who knows of the wonders of faith and hope and love with which the finger of God touches the souls of men? Who can guess at the number of everyday saints, the lives of men and women of heroic virtue who follow in His footsteps Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life? Who can plumb the depths of a peace that the world cannot give, or a joy that is beyond all understanding? Who can imagine the full reality of the mystical body of Christ, alive in the souls of men, breaking down all barriers and making of many but one? And yet all of this and more is a church.

All of this is much, much more than a mere building and

borrowed from the hope of one of the parchment. A more elaborate
image of this same Madonna so dear to the people of Italy, hangs
above the altar during some season of Lent even today.

At last the Italian people of Italy find their own dream,
their own patient, the singing of their conquering old spirit, at last
[illegible]

[illegible]
of stone. It goes beyond that which can be seen. It is a thing
of the spirit. It penetrates to the center of the soul. And the
story can never be fully told in this life because it reaches into
the [illegible], and into the world to be. It takes [illegible] angelic crowd,
[illegible] and [illegible] of man.

[illegible]
spirit by the grace of God? Who knows of the wonders of faith and
hope and love which [illegible] the fire of [illegible] lovingly the spirit of
man? Who can guess at the number of [illegible], the lives of
men and women of heroic virtue who follow in the footsteps who is
the Way, the Truth and the Life? Who can [illegible] the depths of a
peace that the world cannot give, or a joy that is [illegible] all
[illegible] through the full reality of the [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

that which can be seen is but a means to help bring about the wonderful realities in the souls of men that cannot be seen. For almost fifty years now, less five, the Holy Sacrifice of Calvary has been relived each day amongst us. Christ has been with us to give us Life, to teach, to guide, to comfort, to forgive, to sanctify us. That has been, is, and will be the Church of the Holy Rosary in Hadley.

And all that we who pass by can do is to make merely a bare record of but some of these things. We can record, for instance, that as of January 1, 1959, a total of 2,197 souls had received spiritual rebirth through Baptism since this parish was founded. The first was baptized on October 18, 1914. We can record that in the same period 636 families had been founded in Christ through the sacrament of Matrimony. We could not begin to add up the thousands of confessions heard and Holy Communions administered each year for these last forty-five years. Nor can we record all of the individual spiritual ministrations that are the everyday concern of every priest, nor all of the zeal and the sacrifice of those Fathers in Christ who have worked amongst us. We can only record when they passed this way.

Father Julius Jaworek served as pastor from 1914 to 1929, Rev. Stanislaus Feresz from 1929 to 1945, Rt. Rev. Msgr. John Wieloch from 1946 to 1955 and the present pastor, Rev. Joseph Sitkowski since 1955. Father Jaworek and Father Feresz have since passed on to their reward and their remains lie in the

that which can be seen is but a means to help bring about the wonderful results in the souls of men that cannot be seen. For almost thirty years now, less five, the Holy Sacrifice of Calvary has been relived each day amongst us. Christ has been with us to give us bliss, to teach, to guide, to comfort, to forgive, to sanctify us. That has been, is, and will be the mission of the Holy Ghost to the Church.

And all that we who are by can do is to take merely a cursory record of but some of those things. We can record, for instance, that as of January 1, 1[illegible], a total of 2,197 souls had received spiritual relief through Catholic Action since this work was launched. The first was baptized on October 10, 1[illegible]. We can say that in the same period 6[illegible] families had been formed in similar fashion, the movement of baptism. We could not begin to say to the numbers of conferences held and the communions administered each year for these last thirty-five years. Nor can we record all of the individual spiritual distributions that are the everyday concern of every priest, for all of the good and the [illegible].

Father Julius Jarrett served as pastor from 1[illegible] to 1[illegible], [illegible] years from 1[illegible] to 1[illegible]. Rt. Rev. Msgr. John [illegible]

cemetery of the church which they loved and for which they labored.

Among the assistant priests were Rev. Ladislaus J. Szymczyk from 1945 to 1946, Rev. Walter Siemaszko from 1946 to 1948, Rev. John Chwalek from 1948 to 1952, Rev. Henry C. Kreczko from 1952 to 1953, Rev. Woodrow P. Pietrowski from 1953 to 1955, Rev. Anthony V. Rzaza from 1955 to 1956, Rev. Thaddeus W. Mazur from 1956 to 1957 and the present curate is Rev. Aloysius A. Budnik since 1957.

In 1949 a convent was added to the parish buildings and three nuns of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of New Britain, Connecticut, arrived on November 27, 1949 as a very important adjunct to the teaching staff of the parish. At the present time over 450 children of the grammar and high school groups are receiving weekly instruction and training in Hadley, North Amherst and South Amherst. In the outlying areas, mission schools are still conducted by the priests and nuns in private homes for all the neighboring children who cannot come to Hadley because of transportation problems.

The parish organizations that help to weld the parish together are the St. Joseph's Society organized about 1911 and now affiliated with the Polish Roman Catholic Union, the St. Isidore Society organized in 1917, the Holy Rosary Society founded in 1919, and also established in the middle 1940's were the Holy Name Society, the St. Anne's Society, the Polish Women's Alliance, the Young Ladies' Society, and the Children of Mary. The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was added in 1952 and the Catholic Boy Scout

overlooking the church which they loved and for which they lived.

Among the assistant pastors were Rev. Ferdinand C. Wagner, from 1894 to 1896; Rev. Walter Stromenko from 1896 to 1899; Rev. Joseph Malek from 1899 to 1902; Rev. Henry C. Kroeger from 1902 to 1904; Rev. Anthony F. Lebermann from 1904 to 1907; Rev. Anthony J. Hanna from 1907 to 1909; Rev. Theodore J. Maier from 1909 to 1917 and the present curate is Rev. Florentine A. Wenik since 1917.

In 1896 a convent was added to the parish buildings and the nuns of the School of the Immaculate Conception of New Britain, Connecticut, arrived on November 27, 1896 as a very important adjunct to the teaching staff of the parish. At the present time over 100 children of the grammar and high school grades are being taught instruction and training in liberal, [illegible] and commercial courses. The parochial and home in private homes for all the unfortunate children who cannot come to the very benefit of training and education.

The Polish organizations that help to build the parish church are the St. Joseph's Society organized in 1911 and now affiliated with the Polish Roman Catholic Union, the St. Isidore Society organized in 1911, the Holy Rosary Society formed in [illegible]

Troop 505 in 1957.

The Holy Rosary parish covers about 120 square miles of territory in the townships of Hadley, Amherst, Shutesbury and Leverett. As the town of Hadley changes gradually from a rural economy to that of a residential area, the parish will grow and these vast open areas will become another suburb of a growing America. Sixty years ago there was but a handful of the present families of this parish in Hadley. In 1959 Holy Rosary, as the youngest of the churches of Hadley, includes among its members 75% of the total population. Its growth has been, by the grace of God, a further extension of the Kingdom of Heaven and in its own way it is a fulfilment of the parable of the mustard seed "which indeed is the least of all the seeds. But when it is grown up it is greater than all herbs so that the birds of the air come and dwell in the branches thereof." (Matt. Chap. XIII, 31-32).

To the people of Holy Rosary parish, Hadley is no longer a strange land: it is now home. Every foot of the land they own bears the dew of the sweat of their brow: every fertile furrow of their fields bears the imprint of their foot and the palms of their hands are leathery from working the soil into what has been said to be the most fertile valley in the world. Their faces are weather-beaten from their endless bout with the elements, but theirs is a life that gives many of them four score years and to this some can add ten. Theirs is a life of hard self-imposed labor but also

a life replete with satisfactions. In them lives something of the spirit of "The Vision of the Piers Plowman" of Langland, of "The Angelus" of Milet, of "The Four Seasons" of Vivaldi and of "The Ora et Labora" of the Benedictines. They have retained many of the traditions of the old world but have made their own the heritage of the new. They honor the past but are open to the changes of the future: they are conservative and yet they are modern. A farmer has to be in order to survive in today's competitive economy.

Times have changed since this town was founded 300 years ago. The peaceful hollow tinkle of the cowbell echoing from the cattle grazing upon the town common, the hissing and honking of geese upon the lawns, the clippety-clop of horses' hoofs and the clatter of iron tired wagon wheels upon gravel roads have been replaced by the throaty roar of the tractors that thunder softly across the valley from dawn to dusk, by the purr and swish of automobiles upon modern highways and by the roar of the neighboring Westover jets overhead as they daub the sky with trails of white cloud.

But there are many things that have remained the same. The stately elms that line the wide shaded streets, Mt. Holyoke Range gazing majestically like a benign sentinel over the Valley, the Connecticut River meandering in its serpentine path, apple orchards blanketing the rolling hills to the east and north, the carefully patterned quiltwork of fields of asparagus, of onions, of potatoes

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and of tobacco, the smell of freshly cut hay, the flight of the barn-swallows swooping down upon the fields, the neatly maintained homesteads, the quiet atmosphere of a New England village, all of these things the people of Hadley love. When the days' work is done and the light of day is fading, the farmer instinctively casts his gaze upon the western sky to see what weather tomorrow will bring. The sun has set but has left pink footsteps upon the wisps of cloud resting upon the horizon. The morrow will be fair. Purple shadows now cover the foothills of the Berkshires. The flowing river reflects the pastel blue-purple of the sky. The silhouetted elms drape their graceful branches protectingly over the rooftops. As the lights begin to glimmer in the windows of each home one by one, the farmer sets his steps towards home. To him there is no more beautiful place in the world than this Connecticut Valley. He wouldn't give it up for any other in the world.

That is why our people are tied to the land. To them it is home. But they are also tied to each other into one community and one household by their common faith, their common goals and the principles by which they live. And that which ties them together in all of these things is their church. Of them St. Paul could well say again what he said nearly two thousand years ago to the Ephesians "You are no longer exiles or aliens: the saints are your fellow citizens: you belong to God's household. Apostles and prophets are the foundation on which you were built. And the chief cornerstone of it is Jesus Christ Himself: in Him the whole fabric

and of tobacco, the smell of freshly cut hay, the flight of the swallows [illegible] the distant lowing of cattle, the quiet atmosphere of a town [illegible], all of them burn a [illegible] of Hadley love. When the sun's work is done and the light of day is fading, the farmer [illegible] comes into view upon the western slope to see what weather tomorrow will bring. The sun has set but leaves pink footsteps upon the wisps of cloud resting upon the horizon. The morrow will be fair. Gentle breezes now cover the foothills of the Berkshires. The flowing river reflects the varied kaleidoscope of the sky. The children-hood elms cast their graceful tresses protectingly over the roofbows. As the lights begin to glimmer in the windows of each home one by one, the farmer sets his course towards home. To him there is no more beautiful place in the world than this Connecticut Valley. He wouldn't move it an inch for any other in the world.

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is bound together, as it grows into a temple dedicated to the Lord: in Him you too are being built in with the rest, so that God may find in you a dwelling place for His Spirit." (Ephesians Chap. II, 19-22).

Feast of the Annunciation 1959.

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THE ORGANIZATIONS IN THE POLISH SPEAKING CATHOLIC CHURCH
by
Mrs. Emily Bak

The Holy Rosary Parish has eleven organizations. Nearly all the members belong to at least one. The oldest is "Holy Rosary Sodality", which was started in Rome in the 13th Century, later reaching Poland. The ladies in this group took turns meeting in the different homes each month to recite the Rosary.

Before we had the Polish Parish in Hadley, forty-five of the ladies belonged to St. John Cantius Church Sodality. When the Holy Rosary Parish was established in 1914, they joined with another group of thirty. Now we have one hundred and sixty-five members, sixty of which are in North Hadley with Mrs. Malvina Podolak as President. Each May we receive Communion in a body, followed by a Communion Breakfast.

Monsignor Wielock organized St. Ann's Sodality in 1951 with nine members and Mrs. Angie Czajkowski as President. It has grown to a membership of ninety and Mrs. Sophie Wojewoda is now President. This Sodality is noted for its pilgrimages, and it also helps with church smorgasbords, etc. In 1958 it will make its fourth visit to the Shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre in Canada, as well as to other Shrines in that vicinity.

In 1927 twelve ladies formed the "Women's Alliance Group #499" with Janina Kuczynski as President. It is a women's insurance and social organization with headquarters in Chicago and has existed for sixty years. At the present time Mrs. Emily Bak is President of our Group of seventy-three.

The men's insurance organization is called "St. Joseph of Hadley".

Every young girl, after receiving her first Communion, belongs to the "Children of Mary", and to the Junior Choir. When they become young ladies they join "The Young Ladies' Sodality" and the Senior Choir. Mrs. Helen Gwozdz is President of the Senior Choir; Miss Mary Ann Pietras is President of "The Young Ladies' Sodality".

The Holy Name Society, an organization which exists in every Catholic Parish, was formed by Monsignor Wielock in 1946 with Mr. John Martula as its first president. Mr. John Plaza is President of our group which now has sixty members.

Mr. Edward Mokrzecky is President of St. Isadore Society in North Hadley.

The seventy-three Altar Boys have formed a club which meets once a month.

The membership in the Boy Scouts, organized here by Father Sitkowski in 1957, is now thirty-eight and steadily increasing.

Organizations in the Polish Speaking
Catholic Church (cont.)

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